

**ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 15** SPOTLIGHT
29 July 1985

Soviet Defector's 'Memoirs Exposed as CIA, Media Hoax

EXCLUSIVE TO THE SPOTLIGHT

By James Harrer
and George Nicholas

Fifty days after The SPOTLIGHT first reported, in a national exclusive, that the official version of American history "has been controlled and stage-managed by the CIA in collaboration with an alien spy service" (SPOTLIGHT, May 20), the discovery that a recent best-seller is a fake has provided dramatic documentation of this populist newspaper's scoop.

The new publishing scandal is fueled by evidence that a volume of "memoirs" that appeared earlier this year under the byline of Arkady Shevchenko, a high-ranking defector from the Soviet diplomatic service, is a fabrication. It has been concocted and promoted by leading Establishment media organizations, including CBS, "Time" magazine, the Washington "Post" and some of their senior staff writers, working in cahoots with the CIA and its longtime silent partner the Mossad (Israel's secret service).

The best-selling defector's diary is being discredited at a time when both the intelligence establishment and the publishing world find themselves under fire for the falsification and adulteration of jointly produced works of pseudo history.

New evidence about extensive disinformation programs going back for decades has called into question the covert collaboration between various spy agencies and major media organizations both here and abroad (see related story).

The SPOTLIGHT began to scrutinize the Shevchenko affair in April, when a trusted source, of long-established reliability, who was associated with the FBI in New York during the 1970s, reported that Shevchenko's story was being dramatized by domestic disinformation specialists of the CIA.

Shevchenko, however, did not begin as a fraud. He was long known to diplomatic correspondents in New York as

a UN under secretary general, that is, one of the highest-ranking Soviet bureaucrats attached to the international organization. But the United Nations has 24 such officials, including at least one American, and they are neither particularly famous nor powerful figures. PROPAGANDIST

Before being appointed to the world organization, in 1973, Shevchenko is known to have worked as an official propagandist in the Soviet Foreign Ministry. A middle-level bureaucrat, his principal task was to disseminate disinformation in the form of books, articles and official statements about the flaws and errors of U.S. arms control policy and the superior position of the Soviet Union in this area.

Arms control is a promising occupation for ambitious bureaucrats. It goes beyond so-called "disarmament"—that is, the limits or discarding of "doomsday" weapons by means of international agreements such as the SALT I Treaty. It also involves the question of which combat system should be developed and stockpiled whether as a matter of public decision or in secret.

Arms policy became the major issue of the 1970s. In Washington, it attracted numerous dual loyalists who were eager to get their hands on the control levers of the national security bureaucracy.

Among the deeply committed dual-loyalist spokesmen who rose to dominant positions in the national security bureaucracy by specializing in disarmaments and arms control is Max Kampelman—a founder of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), which has come to be known as a lobbyist for the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and the Mossad, Israel's secret service. Another such person is Eugene Rostow, who was appointed director of the State Department's Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Another is Fred Ikle, who eventually occupied the post of under secretary of defense for policy.

Then there is Michel Pillsbury, Rostow's deputy at State. Another dual loyalist is Richard Allen, Kissinger's

former assistant for arms control studies, who moved up to serve as the White House national security adviser during the first Reagan administration. And there are several others.

In Moscow, Shevchenko also found his career flourishing as both the Politburo and the White House focused ever more attention on arms control and disarmament policy. From early 1970, he worked as an adviser to then-Foreign Minister (now President) Andrei Gromyko and in May of 1973, Shevchenko was sent to New York to fill the post of under secretary general for political and security affairs, a UN job reserved for the Soviets. (A matching slot is provided for a U.S. official.)

When Shevchenko broke with his government five years later, in April, 1978, and was granted asylum in the United States, there were rumors (including some from well-informed SPOTLIGHT sources) that his defection was prompted by an uncontrolled sexual appetite rather than by any sincere hunger for political freedom. But the flight of such a senior functionary was a black eye for the communists and a boon (even if a minor one) for American intelligence, and no voices were raised in public to question Shevchenko's disreputable private life. (SPOTLIGHT, May 13.)

In fact, at the beginning of this year, the fugitive communist functionary was promoted into a hero. CBS News ran a documentary on his case in its highly rated "60 Minutes" show and "Time" magazine published a series of excerpts from his forthcoming memoirs. Both news organizations claimed that unknown to anyone except for five top officials in Washington, Shevchenko had been a CIA spy in the Soviet government for several years before his defection—the most important foreign agent who ever gave America secret information.

MOSSAD COUP

Displaying Shevchenko as one of its own (a key operative who funneled high level intelligence to Washington from

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the inner circles of Moscow) was a coup for the CIA. As it turned out, it was also a coup for the Mossad and the Israeli government because Shevchenko, in a series of public statements, claimed to be able to confirm many of the assumptions underlying the ever more intimate U.S.-Israeli collaboration in recent years.

Most important is a detailed public statement made by Shevchenko that appeared in the form of a book entitled "Breaking With Moscow." Published earlier this year by Knopf, a prestigious New York firm now owned by Random House (which in turn is owned by CBS), the work became an instant best-seller.

Hailed by the Establishment, "Breaking with Moscow" sold 200,000 copies in five months as well as movie and subsidiary rights for several million dollars. Insiders called it all inevitable because Shevchenko's principal ghostwriter was Alfred Friendly Jr., a Washington "Post" staff writer of high standing, who reportedly received a whopping \$50,000 advance for his contribution to the book's success.

But although commercially it proved a bonanza, the book also proved Shevchenko's undoing. Simon and Shuster, another mass-market New York publisher, tipped off friendly journalists that three years earlier it had rejected a previous version of Shevchenko's memoirs—and this manuscript had contained none of the exciting claims of espionage and intrigue that made the later version such a hit.

The solution of this mystery was not hard to piece together. "Shevchenko was never a spy, or even a major Soviet defector from the intelligence viewpoint," a veteran FBI agent told these SPOTLIGHT reporters, asking only that his name be withheld. "He wrote a truthful account of his life in 1980, submitted it to Simon and Shuster, and found it rejected; there was simply nothing much gripping or fascinating in the true-life story of this defector."

But where Simon and Shuster saw only a dull story, the disinformation specialists of the CIA and the Mossad sniffed a major opportunity. They rewrote Shevchenko's original manuscript and turned it into a thrilling, if fictitious, spy story. Then, by providing forged evidence to back up the claims in the manuscript, the two spy agencies helped sell it to another New York publisher, who was only too eager to cash in on this scoop.

WINDFALL

According to this source, whose disclosures have been confirmed by other expert observers, the CIA told a number of literary critics that Shevchenko's claims to having been an American undercover agent were substantially true. The result was a wondrous windfall. The publisher hit it rich, reportedly to the tune of several million dollars. The CIA found itself on center stage in the role it most covets: as a triumphant spymaster who has beaten the Soviets at the conspiracy game.

The Mossad and its infiltrated agents in the U.S. government were able to exploit a high-level "intelligence source" who was willing to validate all their policy blueprints and strategic positions.

The only losers were history and the American public, which must depend on such adulterated official versions of major events. "We published the Shevchenko forgery because it looked like a fat payoff. I doubt we will ever publish a serious work of historical revisionism," confessed a Knopf editor in private conversation with a SPOTLIGHT reporter whom he has known for nearly 20 years.

"But off the record, I think revisionism is the wave of the future and the sooner the future arrives, the better for all serious historians and all citizens who want to have an understanding of the past." ●